**The Psychiatrist Asks:**

Robert Carr

1. Do you have thoughts of suicide?

I have a Bowie that lived, for several decades, at my father’s hip. Like unopened family letters, warm against his thigh, it waited to be handed down. Clean sliced edge of an envelope, emptied belly of a trout.

2. Do thoughts command you to act?

Our hot water is good, heat and pressure in wordless conversation. I lower myself on bubbles, and my skin turns angry pink. Mornings shine on shower tile. The bone handle of Dad’s blade is alive against that shade of white.

3. Do you have access to a gun?

Dad’s brother, a mountain hermit, lived at his hunting camp. Acres of barbed wire fenced his plot. Seven months after his Martha died, he took a gun to bed, propped it in his mouth.

4. How do you feel about your future?

I’ll miss my husband. The Bowie sits in a drawer beside Dad’s memorabilia, men in photos beside dressed deer. I’ve tacked three sets of antlers above sliding barn doors. A pocket flask fits in my palm, half-heart of a doe.

5. How many drinks a week?

I dream crimson spirals in the tub, light through crystal high-balls. Turpentine or honey. A fly I’ve swatted falls in bourbon… I open the bathroom window, put down the knife and sink.